

gig economy workers and for those who are now benefiting from the Federal extension, the 13-week extension, but also additional funding. My understanding is direct payments are also in the mix.

I just wish they would get their work done. It has been 9 months since the CARES Act was done. I just hope we can figure out a way to get through the hurdles that remain. I have spent much of the day—as have my colleagues, I am sure—talking to colleagues, trying to figure out how to fix the last couple of issues that apparently are out there. But my hope is that even if it is not a perfect bill for me—and it won't be. I know it won't be. We spent 3 or 4 weeks working on legislation that is bipartisan that isn't what any of us would have crafted individually, but it provides that needed help right now. We need it both for the economic crisis that has been caused by this virus but also the healthcare crisis, which, unfortunately, is getting worse in my home State of Ohio and not better.

The vaccine is on its way. That is very exciting. I believe that the vaccine development and now the distribution are actually quite impressive. I think the administration deserves credit for that, as do so many hard-working scientists who have been sleeping in their offices, making sure that we have this vaccine available. But there is going to be a bridge here. There is a time period between now and March and April when it is not going to be readily available to everybody we represent. During that time period, we need a bridge. We have needed it for a while, so my hope is we will get that done tonight.

TRIBUTE TO TERESA SIMMS

Madam President, I also want to mention briefly, I just came in on the underground subway from the offices and ran into a woman who has spent 41 years working here for us—one of those selfless, hard-working employees of the United States Capitol. Her name is Teresa Simms. Many of you know Teresa. She always has a smile on her face. She is always optimistic. She always has a focus on providing the best service to all of us—staff, other employees, Members. She started in the cafeteria. She then went to the night cleaning crew, cleaning offices here in this place at night. And then she was promoted to being one of the drivers of the subway. For 41 years, again, she has done that job dutifully, with great commitment.

She is going to retire and spend more time with her family and, particularly, take care of her mom, who is ill. Tonight we want to offer our thanks and gratitude to her and our best wishes to her in retirement.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The other thing that is going on tonight—I will say, I guess it is obvious—is that we are about to hit the government shutdown time period again. I mean, we are only about 6½ half hours from another government shutdown. That is totally unacceptable. We

should never have these shutdowns. They don't make any sense. By the way, to my Republican friends who think these shutdowns are good because you shut down a lot of government, and it seems like you would save money—we never save money. The taxpayers always pay more. You go back and provide backpay even for services that aren't provided.

I think we have to figure out a way, when we can't get our work done here—and that is why this is happening. We have not gotten our spending bills, appropriations done here. Therefore, we are facing a government shutdown again. At midnight, we turn into pumpkins. It means the government starts to get shut down.

By the way, it creates confusion and uncertainty for Federal workers, of course, who are wondering, are they going to have their job and are they going to get paid, but also confusion and uncertainty for a lot of citizens who are depending on the services that would otherwise be provided. It is so inefficient. If you believe in the efficiency of government and you believe in, you know, not wasting money, you shouldn't want these government shutdowns.

My hope is that we do pass a continuing resolution at least to kick us into the next couple of days so that we don't have a shutdown tonight. That would be such a disaster for so many people. And it could last a long time, by the way, as these shutdowns did over the last couple of years. It doesn't just mean it is a few days. Let's just not go into shutdown at all.

I have introduced legislation called End Government Shutdowns for 10 years now. I have introduced it in five different Congresses. We have 33 cosponsors. I think it has more cosponsors than any other bill like it, but there are other ideas out there, and I am open to them—just some way to get away from these shutdowns. Our bill says you just can't shut it down. When you are going for a shutdown, instead, you just do a continuing funding from the previous year. And then, by the way, over time, you reduce that by 1 percent every 90 days and every 60 days to get the attention of the appropriators to get them back to work. Other people have other ideas. Our bill has been bipartisan in the past. I don't believe it is today, but it does have 33 cosponsors.

My hope is that we can figure out a way to end these government shutdowns with simple legislation that says: Let's just not do it. I don't think it provides healthy leverage. I think it provides, again, uncertainty and confusion.

CYBER SECURITY

Madam President, 2020 has been a tough year, let's face it. And, unfortunately, it looks like the challenges haven't ended. I came to the floor tonight, primarily, to talk about some shocking and disturbing news we just heard over the last few days, and that

is that there has been a massive, highly sophisticated, and ongoing cyber attack that has compromised the networks of multiple Federal agencies and the private sector.

According to reports, for months now—months—hackers—our intelligence experts think they are most likely connected with the Russian Government in some way. That is what they tell us. But these hackers have engaged in an espionage effort to access information in some of our biggest Federal agencies that hold some of our most sensitive data and our most sensitive and important national security secrets.

Also, again, many U.S. private companies were hacked, as well. These hackers are smart. They targeted some of these agencies that do handle things like national security—the State Department, for instance, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Energy and its Nuclear Security Administration.

This is scary stuff. Others, like the National Institutes of Health, were hacked. Of course, they are closely involved with our work to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, so also a lot of important, sensitive information could have been hacked. They are a treasure trove of information. These are agencies that protect our homeland, promote our freedom abroad, and are on the frontlines battling this pandemic.

But what we know today may be just the tip of the iceberg, we are told. Experts expect the number of agencies as well as a number of private companies victimized by this attack will only continue to grow.

The main IT monitoring platform believed to have been hacked was used across the government and by 33,000 private companies. Shockingly, we also know that FireEye, the preeminent cyber incident response firm, was also breached. So think about this. FireEye, which is a company that people call when they are hacked, was hacked.

We are still learning the details about this attack, but what we know is chilling. Federal investigators from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, CISA, under the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and also the Office of National Intelligence, the ODNI, are all working to determine how this happened, what the extent of it is.

But it looks like the main vulnerability was through a SolarWinds' platform, which is an IT monitoring platform widely, again, widely used by the government and the private sector to oversee the operation of other computer networks.

The hackers disguised their entry into these Federal agencies and company systems in a troubling and clever way. They exploited a vulnerability in a security patch sent out by SolarWinds to update its software. I want to emphasize that—the security patches that we all advocate to be installed as soon as possible to protect